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For Immediate Release
December 11, 2006
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Iraqis see definite benefits from ongoing construction

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Baghdad, Iraq— “Hundreds of projects are under construction and Iraqis are seeing the results,” says the individual responsible for helping upgrade Baghdad’s essential services.

“We’re employing thousands of Iraqis. They need to put food on the table just like anyone else and those with a job are more likely to be supporting their government,” said Lt. Col. Jonathan Revolinsky, the Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Baghdad Area Office, before returning to the Sacramento District this month after a six-month tour.



Col. Jonathan Revolinsky,
Office in Charge of the U.S.
Army Corps of Engineers
(USACE) Baghdad Area
Office. [ARMY PHOTO]

Revolinsky works with a number of different entities, including the Baghdad city government (Amanat), District Advisory Councils and Neighborhood Advisory Councils. “This nation is used to one person issuing orders from the top down. That mindset is now changing and Iraqis are understanding the value of hearing from people on the street, getting feedback, developing a dialogue, encouraging an interaction. It’s what democracy is all about.”

The real story not being told, Revolinsky said, is the one about ordinary Iraqis putting up with extraordinary challenges, but reporting to work nonetheless every day in an unassuming way just trying to make life better for their families.

He directs a staff of 30 U.S. military and civilian personnel along with 50 Iraqi engineers who have the goal of turning Baghdad back into a great city. “It was the birthplace of civilization and today we’re investing huge amounts of money to rebuild 30 years of neglect as residents regain their confidence that this city has a future. It’s hard when you’ve been repressed for that many decades to stand up for what you believe and that’s the challenge we’re facing.”

But Revolinsky is optimistic and that viewpoint starts with the Iraqis on his staff. “They’re awesome individuals. They put their lives on the line every day



An Iraqi workcrew helps renovate a school in northern Baghdad.. [ARMY PHOTO]

Nine new fire stations have been built in Baghdad decreasing response time from an average of 15 minutes to 5 or 6 minutes. “Residents can see first hand that their government is working, that improvements to their neighborhoods are taking place, that there’s reason for hope.”



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